



MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 1(D)1

TO: Honorable Chairperson Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed.D. **DATE:** December 16, 2003
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

FROM: George M. Ringess
County Manager

SUBJECT: CRB Year-end Report

The attached report is being placed on the December 16th agenda of the Board of County Commissioners at the request of the Community Relations Board (CRB) and its Chairperson, Pedro Armando Freyre.



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Chairperson, Barbara Carey-Shuler, Ed.D. **DATE:** December 8, 2003
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Pedro Armando Freyre, Chairman
Community Relations Board (CRB)

SUBJECT: CRB F/Y 2003
Year-end Report

Pedro Freyre

It is my pleasure to have been selected this September to serve Miami-Dade County as the current Chairman of the Community Relations Board.

This report represents the culmination of extensive efforts on behalf of the Community Relations Board to reprise the vitality, significance, and stature of the CRB as it celebrates its 40th year of service to the citizens of Miami-Dade County. The CRB is indebted to the Mayor, Board of County Commissioners, and County Manager for providing support to the office since its re-organization in 2001. The most recent re-organization served to underscore the importance of the work of the CRB in achieving Miami-Dade County's goal of developing positive relationships among all community groups. The Board further expresses its gratitude to the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners for their continued support of our efforts to responsibly and equitably provide a venue for the voices of their constituents on tough issues of governance, parity, and a multitude of related issues. It is our goal to continue to provide assistance and to respond to the needs of Miami-Dade County's diverse residents.

This report summarizes the major accomplishments and is a synopsis of ongoing major initiatives that lend support to the CRB's mission of working proactively to intervene and contain community tensions, and to develop bridges of understanding, communication, and mutual respect among all the residents of Miami-Dade County.

Inter-Group Relations Survey Published

A telephone survey was commissioned by the CRB to examine people's perceptions, opinions, and beliefs about racial, ethnic, and other groups in the community. 959 people were interviewed by telephone in their preferred language: English, Spanish, or Creole. The survey design is based upon the model developed by the National Conference for Community and Justice, (NCCJ) for studying intergroup relations and adapted to include questions specifically relevant to Miami-Dade County. The state-of-the art survey is

intended to assist the CRB in determining priorities and guide future planning and activities. Perspectives of Miami-Dade County residents were gathered about the following:

- The general state of intergroup relations.
- Feelings of closeness, discrimination, influence, and personal contact among a diversity of ethnic, racial, and other groups.
- Access to equal opportunity for education, jobs, equal justice, fair treatment by the police, and media coverage.
- Perspectives on intergroup relations by race and ethnicity.
- Viewpoints about issues and possible solutions to problems.

The survey results have been published in book form and are currently available to the public. The report was distributed at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the CRB in September 2003.

Communications and Outreach

Worked with the Miami Herald to produce a 40th Anniversary Booklet that provided a narrative and pictorial history of the challenges and achievements of the CRB, and the nearly 500 individuals who have served as members during four decades of service.

Collaborated with WLRN Television, the Wolfson Moving Images Archive and private donors to produce a video commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the CRB that featured recollections of former CRB Chairs and photographs depicting pivotal events in the history of the CRB.

The Police Community Relations Task Force Public Information Officers Sub-Committee worked with the Miami-Dade Communications Department, Miami-Dade County Association of Chiefs of Police and police departments from throughout the county to develop a media and community outreach plan. The plan seeks to inform and educate the community about how to effectively access police services and to share information about police programs that facilitate citizen involvement. The benefits are to foster mutual cooperation and respect between citizens and police and to maximize resources for community outreach.

Police and Community Relations

Shootings of unarmed civilians by police officers in Miami-Dade County had created a crisis in police community relations. Persistent questions about the legality and appropriateness of these uses of deadly force have created an atmosphere of mistrust and heightened concerns about the safety of individual citizens and law enforcement officers alike. In addition, long-held perceptions about the inequality of police policies and

practices within minority communities persist. Since March 2002, the CRB's Task Force on Police and Community Relations has brought together community leaders of good will to establish an agenda for enhanced relations. The Task Force provides a "safe space" for law enforcement to work with other concerned interests in a spirit

of cooperation and mutual respect. Much has been accomplished. In 2003 the Task Force's accomplishments included:

- Adoption of an enhanced "use of deadly force policy" by the majority of police departments representing no less than 95% of the sworn officers serving Miami-Dade County.
- Compliance by local police agencies with revised state legislation that allows civilians making complaints against police to discuss the allegations with others.
- Standardized procedures by the State Attorney's Office for the investigation of the shootings of civilians by police to provide for speedier determinations and enhanced public information.
- Revised the policy providing for third party presence when sworn statements are made to the Miami-Dade Police Department's Professional Compliance Bureau alleging misconduct by a department employee.
- Joined with the Miami-Dade Police Department and Independent Review Panel to conduct the Firm, Fair and Friendly Police Community Relations Leadership Program that brought together twenty police supervisors and civilian leaders for an eight-week team-building workshop including group exercises, presentations, brainstorming, role-plays, police 'ride-alongs', and shoot-don't-shoot simulations. Participants sought to understand the point of view of others while developing ideas for creative actions that will constructively transform the current state of affairs. Civilian and police leaders who have completed the program have developed lasting relationships that are being engaged, as needed, to prevent and reduce future conflicts between the police and the community.

The Task Force met with leaders of the City of Miami Police Internal Affairs Division to discuss strategies for educating the community to reduce tensions in the wake of the federal conspiracy trial of City of Miami police officers.

We worked to engage police departments toward the development of "information guidelines" or a "road map" that may be used by civilian and police leaders to provide greater clarity and enhance information sharing after a police shooting occurs. Strategies are being considered to better educate and inform the community-at-large about the procedures employed by law enforcement agencies when investigating the shootings of civilians by police. Once the guidelines are developed Task Force leaders will work with police agencies throughout Miami-Dade to encourage adoption.

The CRB adopted a resolution encouraging police agencies in Miami-Dade County to adopt tazer technology as a means to prevent and reduce the use of deadly force against civilians.

The chair and staff of the CRB Police Community Relations Task Force met with responsible members of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) for the purpose of clarifying the findings of the MDPD Administrative Review of the shooting of Mr. Eddie Lee Macklin by Officer James Johns. The following findings were reported to the Committee:

- That MDPD investigators neither anticipate, nor are they prepared, to respond to community perceptions or concerns about their work or findings.
- That information detailed in the Disposition Panel report is not provided in a manner that facilitates its understanding by civilians who are not law enforcement experts.

The Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board, the Miami-Dade Independent Review Panel and the City of Miami Civilian Investigative Panel submitted an application to host the 2005 convention of the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement.

Ongoing activities of the CRB Task Force on Police and Community Relations include:

- Developing and Implementing a Police Community Relations Community Education Plan.
- Developing a community outreach program consisting of a series of community forums, and awareness events in locations throughout the community.
- Facilitating a Police Investigations Committee to develop strategies that will enhance public confidence in the policies and regulations that police department's employ when investigating the shootings of civilians by police.
- Convening a Police Complaint Procedures Committee that is focused on making the complaint process more user-friendly and will include an investigation of state of the art processes for internal review and citizen's complaints.

Other issues to be examined are: Alternatives to Deadly Force; Use of Deadly Force Legislation; Treatment of Mentally Ill Subjects; Police Recruitment and Training; and Enhancing the permitting process for major events.

Education and Advocacy

The CRB's Education and Advocacy Committee addressed the following issues: Civil Rights of Asians and Immigrants; Voting Rights for Ex-Felons; Proposed State Cuts for Children and Families In Need of Services; a High School Students' Community Service Project; and a proposed Demonstration in Washington DC for Immigration Equity and Reform.

On October 29, 2002, more than 200 Haitian refugees ran aground in a boat off Key Biscayne. The television images, shown all over the nation and the world that day, were heartbreaking and touching. The CRB worked with community leaders in Miami-Dade County who united and called upon the administration in Washington to give fair treatment to Haitian refugees. A coalition of twenty-one Miami-Dade elected officials, convened by Miami-Dade County Commission Chair Barbara Carey-Shuler, adopted a Resolution urging President Bush to rescind discriminatory immigration practices. One June 4th, 2003, a multi-ethnic delegation of elected leaders, public officials, and community activists traveled to Washington D.C. for two days of meetings with members of Congress and the Bush administration. The Miami-Dade Elected Officials and Grassroots Delegation on Fairness in Immigration was convened through the assistance of Congressman Kendrick Meek, Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, Board of County Commission Chairwoman Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler, Vice Chairwoman Ms. Katy Sorenson, and Commissioner Jimmy Morales. Staff support to facilitate meetings was also provided by the Office of Community Relations. County Commissioners who led the delegation in Washington D.C. were Vice Chair Katy Sorenson and Commissioners Jimmy Morales and Sally Heyman. Before leaving, the Delegation, with the assistance of the Mayor, Board of County Commission Chair and Members and members of the CRB conducted a rally and media event on the west lawn of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center. The delegation successfully demonstrated Miami-Dade County leadership's resolve to support each other and uphold our commitment to fair treatment and due process for all immigrants.

40th Anniversary Conference

The CRB produced a two-day conference and a gala in recognition of the 40th Anniversary of the Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board. The theme of the events was "Uniting Our Cultures" and included presentations and discussions on cutting-edge topics in community relations including: the criminal justice system; housing; education; immigration; business; youth; and ethnic and racial diversity. Mayor Penelas and the Chair and Members of the Board of County Commissioners participated as presenters, panelists and/or

guests. The 40 Anniversary marked a milestone in the growth and development of the Miami-Dade County Community Relations Board (CRB) and its vital mission. The Ruby

Anniversary celebration highlighted the many changes that have taken place and reaffirmed that the CRB is once again moving in the right direction playing a significant role in our community.

The CRB facilitated an EDUCATION AND AWARENESS WORKSHOP at the request of the members of the City of Miami Community Relations Board. Training and information on the roles and responsibilities of a community relations board and strategies for crisis intervention were also provided to the members and staff of the newly formed Florida City/Homestead Community Relations Board.

The Office of Community Relations Council of Advisory Board Chairs, which includes the chairpersons of the Miami-Dade County Asian American Advisory Board, Black Affairs Advisory Board, Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board, Commission for Women and the CRB, submitted an amendment to the Ordinance creating the CRB that granted voting rights to the advisory board chairs. The Amendment was adopted by the BCC and the Mayor.

Economic Issues

The CRB Economic Issues Committee addressed the following issues:

- The need to target underserved communities with information about filing for the Earned Income Credit tax relief program.
- The need to get information about economic development programs and opportunities to underserved communities.
- The Committee is working with Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, Miami Mayor Manuel Diaz and a variety of economic development and poverty assistant programs to assist efforts to reduce poverty and deprivation.

Housing

There is growing concern among many in our community about issues related to housing in Miami-Dade County. The CRB convened a committee of experts, activists, and concerned citizens to address intergroup relations concerns centered on this vital community resource. The Committee is working to set goals and objectives and determine strategies to ensure the efficacy of its activities. The Committee has already begun to investigate tough issues including: A Community Proposal for the Scott Carver HOPEVI Project; National Housing Trust Fund Act; and the lack of Community Acceptance of Low and Moderate Income Housing.

- Other priority issues to be addressed by the Housing Committee include:
- Predatory lending; Housing discrimination; Availability of housing for the disabled and special needs in low income projects; Need to create more affordable housing for the moderate income; Section 8 Housing program; Homeownership opportunities; Training; and Tough Love.

The CRB Housing Committee presented a Community Briefing on the Hope VI Public Housing Development. The demolition of the James E. Scott Housing Project and its replacement with a mixture of homeownership, public housing, and rental units has been a source of controversy exacerbated by misunderstanding and misinformation. This event brought together about seventy five community leaders, housing professionals and community activists in an effort to reduce tensions with factual information and strategies to address gaps in services. Topics discussed included: the Status of Remaining Residents; Section 8 Vouchers; Homeownership Program; Demolition Schedules; the Make-Up of the Revitalized Community; Gaps in Services. Presenters were representatives from: the Office of County Commissioner Dorrin Rolle; the Miami-Dade Housing Agency; Miami Workers' Center; Model City Economic Development Group, and others.

CRB Response to Community Tensions

The CRB Crisis Prevention and Response Committee helped to provide resources for the training of fifty new CRB Response team members. These volunteers are county employees who are called upon, as needed, to monitor situations that could produce community tension or could develop into community unrest. The Response Team also works with law enforcement and governmental agencies to preserve peaceful and harmonious community relations.

The 20-hour training regiment included information and best practices on:

- The Crisis Team Concept
- Crowd Control
- Ethnic Diversity
- Community Concerns
- Communications/ Rumor control
- Deployment

The leadership of the CRB Crisis Prevention and Response Team is also collaborating with the Miami-Dade County Office of Homeland Security to support its community outreach efforts.

Free Trade Area of the Americas

There is growing community interest and concern about the 8th Ministerial Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) negotiations to be held in Miami this November. Media

reports that tens of thousands of protesters, some of them violent, will converge on our city has tensions increasing. Proponents and opponents of the proposed FTAA Treaty, as well as supporters of the establishment of the Secretariat in Miami-Dade County, are eagerly seeking avenues through which to share their views with local residents. Toward that end, the CRB hosted a community forum, "The Great Trade Debate" in the Board of County Commission Chambers. County Commission Chairperson, Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler also served as host. The League of Women Voters and the Inter-American Forum at the Collins Center for Public Policy were responsible for the panelists and the program. Approximately 100 members of the public attended and the event was broadcast live on Miami-Dade Television. A second forum was hosted by CRB and Chairwoman Carey-Shuler in the BCC Chambers that focused on: "The First Amendment and the FTAA in Miami". The League of Women Voters and the Inter-American Forum also served as sponsors along with the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida. These forums provided a welcomed opportunity for Miami-Dade residents to hear different perspectives and have their voices heard in a local setting. The high level of debate and the enthusiastic, yet orderly, participation of the public, gave evidence of the growth our community into a global center. Miami-Dade displayed its ability to hear dissenting voices in a peaceful, dignified, and noble manner.

CRB members and staff met with the City of Miami Community Relations Board and City Police to plan crowd control and free speech monitoring activities for Goodwill Ambassadors during demonstrations related to the Free Trade Area of the America's conference to be held in Miami in November. The CRB also provided input for the "Frequently Asked Questions" booklet produced and distributed by the Miami FTAA Office.

Community Forums, Partnerships and Collaborations

The CRB convened a gathering of approximately fifty grassroots leaders and prominent citizens committed to empowering local communities of African decent. "CREATING CONSENSUS ON COMMON CONCERNS, A DIALOGUE AMONG COMMUNITY LEADERS OF AFRICAN DECENT" included prominent individuals within the local Caribbean and African American communities who have expressed concern about the need to overcome barriers to intergroup cooperation and foster opportunities for mutual support. The goal of the meeting was to engage people in dialogue about issues, to build a consensus about priority issues, and begin to formulate strategies for change. Common concerns discussed included: Immigration Equity, Improving Police Community Relations, and Affordable Housing, Making the County Commission More Diverse and Inclusive, Training and Employment Opportunities, and Improving Intergroup Relations in the Public Schools.

The CRB and its Task Force on Police Community Relations convened a public meeting with representatives of the State Attorneys Office to discuss the decision not to file criminal charges against the Police Officer involved in the shooting death of Eddie

Macklin during MLK Jr. Day festivities in Liberty City in January 2001. The special meeting took place in the Board of County Commission Chambers and was televised on MDTV. Remarks were made by State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and members of the State Attorney's Investigation Team described the results and the evidence on which the decision was made. The presentation included photographs and schematics. There was a need for swift and public efforts by concerned leaders to address the high level of tension between law enforcement and members of our community. The meeting served to address relevant questions about the report and its findings; identified issues for future address and helped to foster a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect that serves to build trust between law enforcement and the community.

The CRB and OCR worked with Commissioner Dennis Moss and to convene a community meeting to address high levels of concern related to police, court, and code compliance services impacting some residents of unincorporated South Dade.

The CRB Education and Advocacy Committee convened a public forum "FCAT TESTING: THE IMPACT ON OUR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE."

The state of Florida's plan to improve education included new rules for student graduation and promotion. This year about 4,800 high school seniors in Miami-Dade County, and an estimated 12,500 statewide, failed to pass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. In addition, nearly 43,000 Florida third graders, and 7,000 in Miami-Dade County, are at risk of being held back because of poor performance on this one test. More than one hundred prominent educators, lawmakers, parents, teachers, young people, and concerned citizens took part and witnessed a thoughtful discussion and examination of the issues. Panelists included: a School Board Member; State Representatives; Staff from the Dade County Public Schools; Community Organization leaders and parents.

A Public Forum was conducted to discuss the importance of focusing on peace, equality, and mutual respect during this time of heightened anxiety. The CRB issues a statement declaring that "Miami-Dade Is No Place For Hate." Miami-Dade County is home to people of many varied religions, ethnicities and national origins, and the CRB wished to emphasize that no one in Miami-Dade County should be singled out for hatred, prejudice or blame based on his or her ethnic origin, nationality, or religion. The meeting was conducted in the BCC Chambers and aired live on Miami-Dade Television. Speakers included representatives from South Florida Muslim organizations, U.S. Attorney's Office, Miami-Dade Police Department, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Anti Defamation League, and the Dade Association of Chiefs of Police.

No Place For Hate

In March 2003, the CRB joined hands with the ADL to plan a three-year, multi-tiered, public participation initiative that encourages individuals, institutions, schools and the

religious community to sign a Resolution of Respect and conduct one of a menu of over 100 suggested activities that help put an end to prejudice and to promote tolerance. Recently such international organizations as the Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem have partnered with the CRB and the ADL under the theme of "Coexistence" to support the No Place for Hate campaign in Miami Dade County. The YWCA is also a current partner in this effort and has agreed with the CRB that Miami-Dade County is indeed "No Place for Hate". This year's Miami Book Fair hosted a No Place for Hate information booth where residents signed pledges to bear witness that they will do all possible to end prejudice in Miami-Dade County.



Barbara Jordan

Assistant County Manager